



# DEPARTMENT of the INTERIOR

## news release

### Fish and Wildlife Service

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#### LANDMARK EXECUTIVE ORDER ON FISHERIES RESOURCES SIGNED BY PRESIDENT CLINTON

President Clinton gave a boost to the Nation's anglers by signing a precedent-setting Executive Order to strengthen fisheries conservation and provide for more and better recreational fishing opportunities.

The Order requires Federal agencies to strengthen efforts to improve the quality of streams, rivers, and lakes supporting recreational fisheries, establishes a National Recreational Fisheries Coordination Council, charges the Council with developing a comprehensive conservation plan, calls for a new policy to promote compatibility between the protection of endangered species and recreational fisheries, and expands the role of the federally chartered Sport Fishing and Boating Partnership Council.

"This is a huge step forward for recreational fishing in this country," said U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service Director Mollie Beattie in an address during a Recreational Fishing Summit held June 8 in Washington, DC, and sponsored by the American Sportfishing Association. "The Executive Order opens up a treasure trove of possible partnerships that will benefit tomorrow's angling public."

The Order, signed June 8, directs Federal agencies to identify degraded habitats and promote their restoration to increase fishing opportunities, acknowledging the key to accomplishing this task is through strong partnerships among Federal, state, and tribal governments and the private sector, including landowners.

"Most importantly, the Executive Order will help get all Federal agencies on the same page when it comes to protecting and conserving valuable aquatic resources," said Director Beattie. "Partnerships represent our best chance at achieving meaningful enhancement of fisheries and increasing fishing opportunities in this country."

The new Council, which will consist of representatives from the Environmental Protection Agency and the Departments of Interior, Commerce, Agriculture, Defense, Transportation, and Energy, will

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draft a Recreational Fisheries Conservation Plan setting forth a 5-year agenda for each of the cooperating Federal departments and agencies. The Council will ensure Federal agencies will consider the social and economic values of healthy aquatic resources that support recreational fisheries, recommend ways to reduce overlapping Federal programs, and increase information sharing.

The Order charges the Fish and Wildlife Service and the National Marine Fisheries Service, the two agencies responsible for administering the Endangered Species Act, to develop a joint policy to ensure consistency in the Act's administration, increase collaboration with other agencies and organizations, and increase outreach efforts on the requirements of the Act.

The idea for the Executive Order came first from the Sport Fishing and Boating Partnership Council, established in 1993 to advise the Interior Department on recreational fishing and boating issues and comprised of 18 representatives from the private sector and state government agencies. The Order calls upon the Council to monitor, review, and report Federal activities affecting aquatic resources to the National Recreational Fisheries Coordination Council.

Director Beattie also said the timing of the Order is crucial, citing legislation that recently passed the House of Representatives to revise the Clean Water Act. "The effect of this pending legislation on the Nation's aquatic ecosystems would be devastating, removing the protections that have restored polluted waterways and depleted fisheries around the country. We can't have a healthy fishery in a dying river, stream, or lake."

THE WHITE HOUSE  
WASHINGTON

June 8, 1995

Warm greetings to everyone gathered in our nation's capital for the Recreational Fisheries Summit, sponsored by the American Sportfishing Association.

America's lakes and wetlands, its rivers and wildlife are among our most treasured natural resources. Preserving this heritage for our children requires tremendous care, and our nation's 60,000,000 anglers have been an important force behind such conservation efforts for years. Today, you are among America's most ardent and effective protectors of these precious resources -- helping to keep our environment safe and clean for all of us to enjoy.

The American Sportfishing Association has embraced these objectives, bringing together diverse interests to safeguard fish, wildlife, and water resources. You can take great pride in knowing that your efforts are helping to conserve and enhance aquatic habitats while ensuring more and better recreational fishing opportunities for our nation's fishing enthusiasts.

In conjunction with these efforts, I have signed an Executive Order on Recreational Fisheries that will create a national policy for aquatic resources. This cooperative venture further demonstrates our Administration's commitment to improving the quantity, function, sustainable productivity, and distribution of our nation's aquatic ecosystems. I am pleased that this order will serve both the environment and our nation's dedicated anglers.

Best wishes to all for a productive, enjoyable summit.

*Bill Clinton*

THE WHITE HOUSE  
Office of the Press Secretary

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For Immediate Release

June 8, 1995

EXECUTIVE ORDER

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RECREATIONAL FISHERIES

By the authority vested in me as President by the Constitution and the laws of the United States of America, and in furtherance of the purposes of the Fish and Wildlife Act of 1956 (16 U.S.C. 742a-d, and e-j), the Fish and Wildlife Coordination Act (16 U.S.C. 661-666c), the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969 (42 U.S.C. 4321 et seq.), and the Magnuson Fishery Conservation and Management Act (16 U.S.C. 1801-1882), and other pertinent statutes, and in order to conserve, restore, and enhance aquatic systems to provide for increased recreational fishing opportunities nationwide, it is ordered as follows:

Section 1. Federal Agency Duties. Federal agencies shall, to the extent permitted by law and where practicable, and in cooperation with States and Tribes, improve the quantity, function, sustainable productivity, and distribution of U.S. aquatic resources for increased recreational fishing opportunities by: (a) developing and encouraging partnerships between governments and the private sector to advance aquatic resource conservation and enhance recreational fishing opportunities;

(b) identifying recreational fishing opportunities that are limited by water quality and habitat degradation and promoting restoration to support viable, healthy, and, where feasible, self-sustaining recreational fisheries;

(c) fostering sound aquatic conservation and restoration endeavors to benefit recreational fisheries;

(d) providing access to and promoting awareness of opportunities for public participation and enjoyment of U.S. recreational fishery resources;

(e) supporting outreach programs designed to stimulate angler participation in the conservation and restoration of aquatic systems;

(f) implementing laws under their purview in a manner that will conserve, restore, and enhance aquatic systems that support recreational fisheries;

(g) establishing cost-share programs, under existing authorities, that match or exceed Federal funds with nonfederal contributions;

(h) evaluating the effects of Federally funded, permitted, or authorized actions on aquatic systems and recreational fisheries and document those effects relative to the purpose of this order; and

(i) assisting private landowners to conserve and enhance aquatic resources on their lands.

Sec. 2. National Recreational Fisheries Coordination Council. A National Recreational Fisheries Coordination Council ("Coordination Council") is hereby established. The Coordination Council shall consist of seven members, one member designated by each of the following Secretaries -- Interior, Commerce, Agriculture, Energy, Transportation, and Defense -- and one by the Administrator of the Environmental Protection Agency. The Coordination Council shall: (a) ensure that the social and economic values of healthy aquatic systems that support recreational fisheries are considered by Federal agencies in the course of their actions;

(b) reduce duplicative and cost-inefficient programs among Federal agencies involved in conserving or managing recreational fisheries;

(c) share the latest resource information and management technologies to assist in the conservation and management of recreational fisheries;

(d) assess the implementation of the Conservation Plan required under section 3 of this order; and

(e) develop a biennial report of accomplishments of the Conservation Plan.

The representatives designated by the Secretaries of Commerce and the Interior shall cochair the Coordination Council.

Sec. 3. Recreational Fishery Resources Conservation Plan. (a) Within 12 months of the date of this order, the Coordination Council, in cooperation with Federal agencies, States, and Tribes, and after consulting with the Federally chartered Sport Fishing and Boating Partnership Council, shall develop a comprehensive Recreational Fishery Resources Conservation Plan ("Conservation Plan").

(b) The Conservation Plan will set forth a 5-year agenda for Federal agencies identified by the Coordination Council. In so doing, the Conservation Plan will establish, to the extent permitted by law and where practicable; (1) measurable objectives to conserve and restore aquatic systems that support viable and healthy recreational fishery resources, (2) actions to be taken by the identified Federal agencies, (3) a method of ensuring the accountability of such Federal agencies, and (4) a comprehensive mechanism to evaluate achievements. The Conservation Plan will, to the extent practicable, be integrated with existing plans and programs, reduce duplication, and will include recommended actions for cooperation with States, Tribes, conservation groups, and the recreational fisheries community.

Sec. 4. Joint Policy for Administering the Endangered Species Act of 1973. All Federal agencies will aggressively work to identify and minimize conflicts between recreational fisheries and their respective responsibilities under the Endangered Species Act of 1973 ("ESA") (16 U.S.C. 1531 et seq.). Within 6 months of the date of this order, the Fish and Wildlife Service and the National Marine Fisheries Service will promote compatibility and reduce conflicts between the administration of the ESA and recreational fisheries by developing a joint agency policy that will; (1) ensure consistency in the administration of the ESA between and within the two agencies, (2) promote collaboration with other Federal, State, and Tribal fisheries managers, and (3) improve and increase efforts to inform nonfederal entities of the requirements of the ESA.

Sec. 5. Sport Fishing and Boating Partnership Council. To assist in the implementation of this order, the Secretary of the Interior shall expand the role of the Sport Fishing and Boating Partnership Council to: (a) monitor specific Federal activities affecting aquatic systems and the recreational fisheries they support;

(b) review and evaluate the relation of Federal policies and activities to the status and conditions of recreational fishery resources; and

(c) prepare an annual report of its activities, findings, and recommendations for submission to the Coordination Council.

Sec. 6. Judicial Review. This order is intended only to improve the internal management of the executive branch and it is not intended to create any right, benefit or trust responsibility, substantive or procedural, enforceable at law or equity by a party against the United States, its agencies, its officers, or any other person.

WILLIAM J. CLINTON

THE WHITE HOUSE,  
June 7, 1995.